

Charles Sweetney House
CH-735
Bel Alton
Private

Circa 1900

The Charles Sweetney House is a ruinous example of the simple vernacular structures erected by African American at the turn of the 20th century. The dwelling stands in the village of Bel Alton on four acres deeded to Sweetney in 1895 by members of the Cox family of nearby Rich Hill (CH-177NR). The house consists of a 2-part side gable frame dwelling covered with a standing seam roof and weatherboard siding. The main block has a two rooms on the first and second floors divided by a thin partition. A quarter-turn corner stair provides access to the second story from the smaller of the two rooms.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-735

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Charles Sweetney House

other

2. Location

street and number	North side Bel Alton-Newtown Road	not for publication
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city, town	Bel Alton	X	vicinity
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county Charles

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Nellie Sweetney heirs c/o Patricia Butler

street and number	PO Box 29222	telephone	Unknown
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city, town	Washington	state	DC	zip code	20017-0222
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4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse tax map and parcel: 55 p. 220

city, town	La Plata	liber	JST 8	folio	4
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5. Primary Location of Additional Data

☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report
☐ Other

6. Classification

Category		Ownership		Current Function		Resource Count		
						Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	district	<input type="checkbox"/>	public	<input type="checkbox"/>	landscape			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private	<input type="checkbox"/>	recreation/culture	<u>1</u>		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	both	<input type="checkbox"/>	religion			sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	site			<input type="checkbox"/>	social			structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	object			<input type="checkbox"/>	transportation			objects
				<input type="checkbox"/>	work in progress	<u>1</u>		Total
				<input type="checkbox"/>	government			
				<input type="checkbox"/>	health care			
				<input type="checkbox"/>	industry			
				<input type="checkbox"/>	vacant/not in use			
				<input type="checkbox"/>	other:			
						Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory		
						0		

7. Description

Inventory No. CH-735

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Charles Sweetney House is a ruinous example of the simple vernacular structures erected by African-Americans at the turn of the 20th century. The dwelling stands in the village of Bel Alton on four acres deeded to Sweetney in 1895 by members of the Cox family of nearby Rich Hill (CH-177NR). The house site is approached by an unnamed lane which once connected Doctor Spencer Road to Bel Alton Newtown Road and provided access to this dwelling along with the adjacent, now demolished John Henry Kelly House (CH-736) which was similar in form.

The house consists of a 2-part side gable frame dwelling covered with a standing seam roof, weatherboard siding adhered with wire cut nails, and a single exterior end chimney. The frame stands on a foundation of locust posts. The east gable end includes the attached one-story kitchen wing. The main block measures 20 feet wide and 16 feet deep. The front elevation is three bays in length with a centered doorway flanked by 4/4 windows on either end. The roof span is 23 feet. A 20th century porch once sheltered the entrance but has now collapsed. The side elevations of the main block are without fenestration. The rear elevation includes only a single doorway. The kitchen wing is 14 feet in length. The front elevation has a door near the main block opposite a window. The opposite rear wall has a centered window.

The main block has an overall hall and parlor plan with the main door leading into the largest of the two first floor rooms. The smaller room includes a quarter turn stair. A partition has been added to create a hall passage and to provide privacy for the attached room. The kitchen appears to have been a later addition. Interior details in the main block include 4-panel doors, tongue and groove paneling throughout and sea-green wall paint. Beds in the small stair room indicate this was used as a sleeping quarter.

8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-735

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates Circa 1890

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates Circa 1890

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The Charles Sweetney House is a representative example of the types of vernacular structures built by African-Americans in the late 19th century. In December 1895, Samuel Cox Jr. and Nannie Cox, his wife sold to Charles Sweetney four acres of ground described as just outside the northernmost corner of the recently surveyed Bel Alton town lands, including existing buildings and improvements. Bel Alton, originally known as Cox's Station, was the first railroad town in Charles County to offer daily passenger service to Bowie, beginning in 1873. Early on it rivaled La Plata, as a bustling rail town.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CH-735

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 4.0

Acreage of historical setting 4.0

Quadrangle name Popes Creek

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Charles Sweetney House is associated with Charles County Property Tax Map 55 Parcel 220.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cathy C. Hardy/Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Charles County Planning

date 3/25/2002

street and number 200 Baltimore St.

telephone 301-396-5815

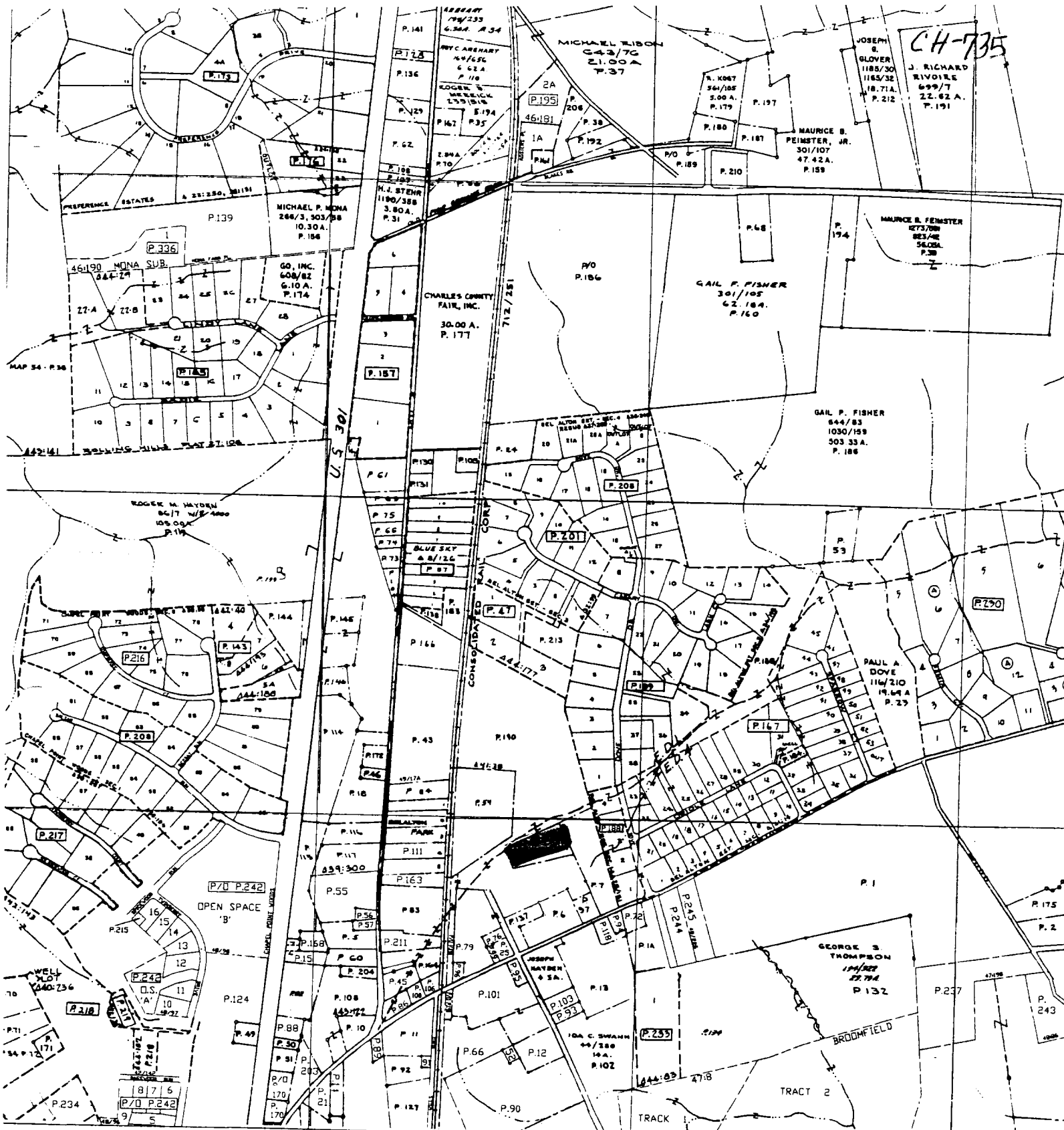
city or town La Plata

state MD zip code 20646

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

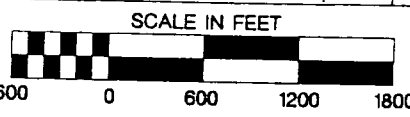
return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032
410-514-7600



10.9mm
28.5mm

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MARYLAND
PROPERTY
THE INFORMATION
FROM THIS DESK
IF SHOULD NOT BE
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MAPPING SECTION
REVISED TO

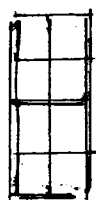
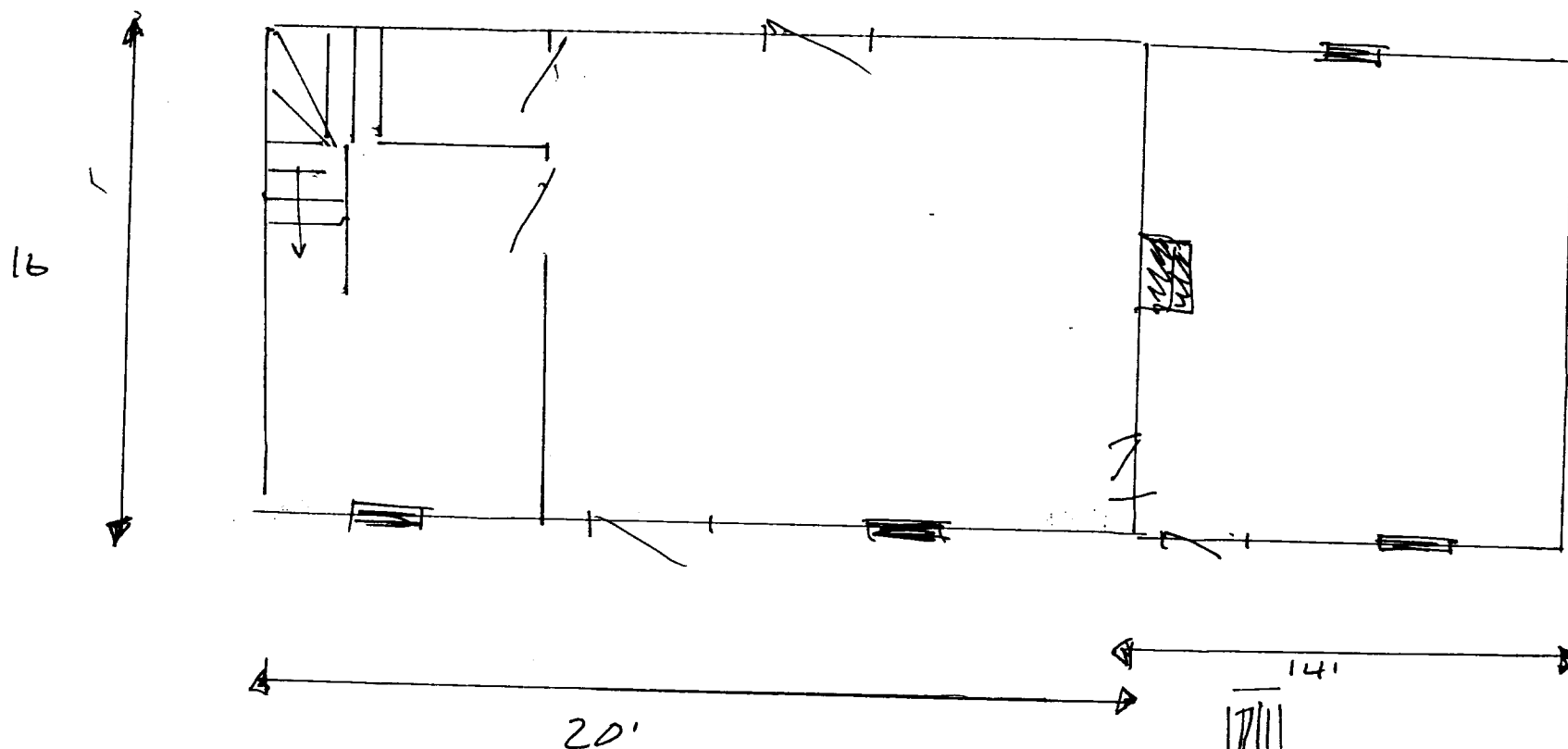
Map 55

803

806

809

CH# 735 Charles County, MD
 Name: CHARLES SWEETNEY H.S.
 Location: BEL ALTON
 Quad: POPE'S CREEK

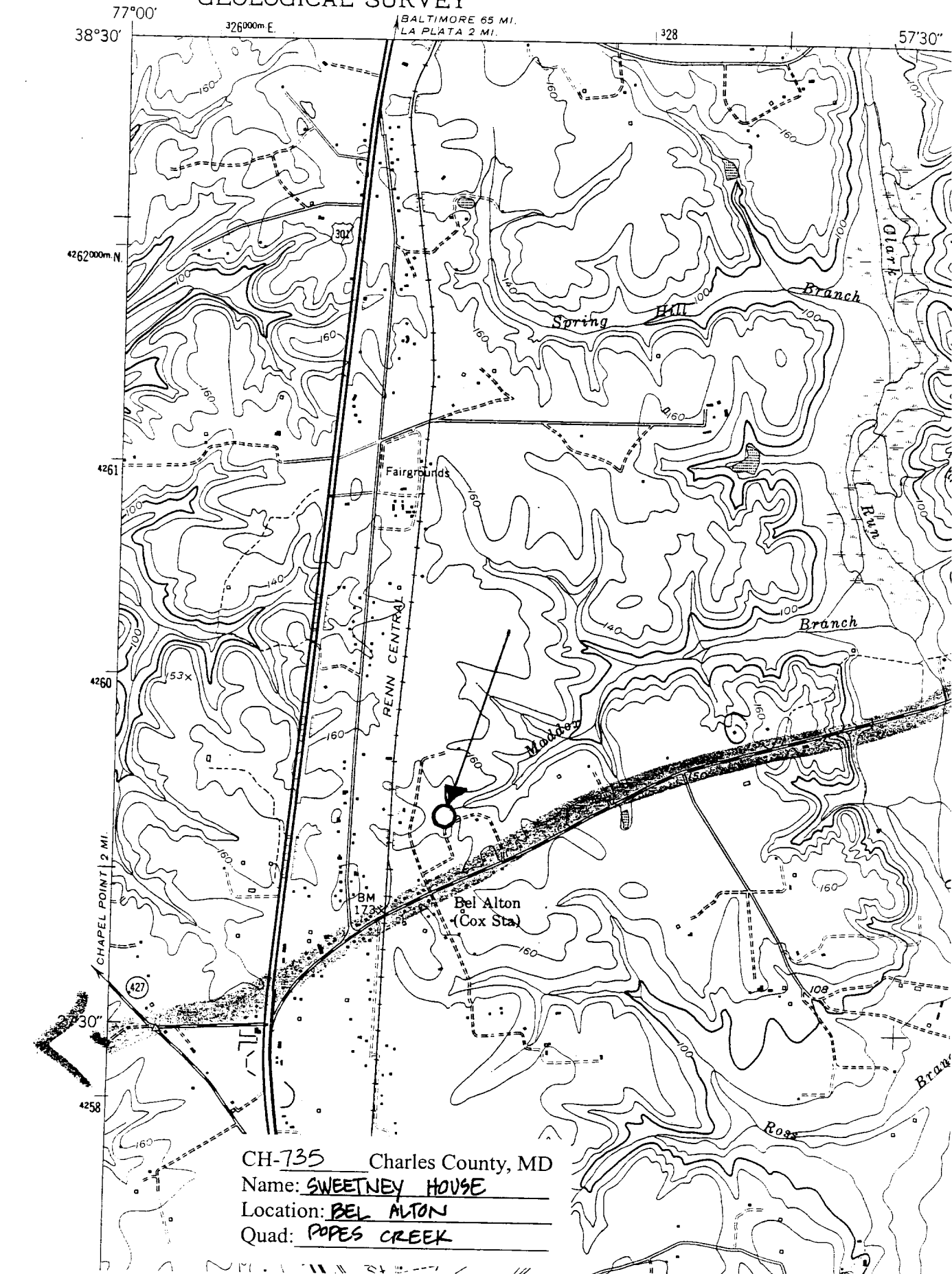


1 1/2 STORY FRAME DWELLING 4 PANEL DOORS
 4/4 WINDOWS INTERIOR - TONGUE & GROOVE PANELING
 LOCUST POST FOUNDATION SQUARE CHIMNEY FLUE
 WEATHER BOARD SIDING - WIDE PLANK SEA GREEN PAINT

23" ROOF SPAN

5581 11 SE
(PORT TOBACCO)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



CH-735 Charles County, MD
Name: SWEETNEY HOUSE
Location: BEL ALTON
Quad: POPES CREEK



CH-735
SWEETNEY HOUSE
CHARLES CO, MD
C HARDY
1/2002
MD SHPO
LOOKING N
1 OF 2



CH- 735
SWEETNEY HOUSE
CHARLES CO, MD
C. HARDY
1/2002
MD SHPO
LOOKING NE
20FZ